

**Potential:** *It's not what you've got, it's what you use that makes a difference.* —Zig Ziglar, motivational speaker

## Palau Road progress continues despite delays

*Story and photos by Doug MaKitten*

Progress continues on the Palau Compact Road, the District's biggest, most challenging construction project. (*Editor's Note: for a detailed project description, see the story "Palau Compact Road Will Transform Island Nation" in the April/May 2001 Pacific Connection.*)

Work on the 53-mile-road is ongoing at several locations — known as "packages" — on the Republic of Palau's Babeldaob Island. By September, three construction camps and a concrete batch plant were completed. Dredging sites were developed in three locations and two quarries were established. Approximately 55 percent of the trees were cleared from road sites, 30 percent of the grubbing, 13 percent of the excavation and five percent of the embankment work was done. In addition, existing bridges on 25 locations were either replaced or repaired.

Though these accomplishments are significant, problems with frequent rain and resulting soil compaction difficulties have put the road a year behind schedule. The new completion date is summer 2004.

Despite the slower than anticipated progress, both Republic of Palau officials and the Department of Interior's Office of Insular Affairs, HED's customer, praised the Corps.

"The Army Corps has done a good job of managing this project and we appreciate their assistance," said Fritz Koshiha, Republic of Palau Minister for Resources and Development.

HED's customer for the compact road project is the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs. OIA's mission is to develop more efficient and effective government in the so-called insular areas that have administrative relationships with the U.S.

The agency does this by recommending policies, providing fi-

rior has done in any of our islands," said OIA's Tom Bussanich. "It is very important to us."

"I have always been really impressed with the district engineers and the Corps staff, people like Dave Kern (HED project manager), C. Alex Morrison (the Palau Resident Office Resident Engineer), Pat Billington and the District's legal staff," Bussanich continued. "They are responsive, committed, creative, and effective."

"I think this is one of the most challenging, interesting and



*1st Lt. Tom Piazz, pointing, and Mark Wittrock, Palau Resident Office project engineer, check work in Package B of the Palau Compact Road project. Piazz, a recent West Point graduate, was on a temporary duty assignment with HED this summer.*

rewarding projects in the Corps, when you consider the technical difficulties and the cultural and economic impacts for the Republic of Palau," said Morrison.

"We have a great staff in the Resident Office," Morrison continued. "I think we are working well together, with our prime contractor Daewoo, with the Department of Interior, with the Republic of Palau government and everyone else involved to successfully complete the work."

In addition to the construction itself, Morrison and his staff emphasize safety and outreach, involving the Republic of Palau's top officials. President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. has visited the project and Morrison meets regularly with government officials and civic groups to keep them up to date.

HED Project Manager Dave Kern's perspective is similar to Morrison's.

"Planning, designing and constructing the road has been very challenging," said Kern. "Everyone involved has worked hard and there is a continuing great team spirit between the U.S. and the Republic of Palau. Because of that I think we will overcome future challenges too."

Daewoo, a well-known Korean company that has built projects in many parts of the world, is the prime contractor on the Palau Compact Road project.

"This is a very important job for Daewoo," said J.W. Kim,

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*Palau Office Resident Engineer C. Alex Morrison briefs the Palau Rotary Club on the progress of the construction of the Palau Compact Road. Community outreach is an important aspect of the project.*

nancial and technical assistance, and by strengthening federal-insular relationships. One of those relationships is with the Republic of Palau.

"I've been involved with the Palau Compact Road project since 1994 and it is the largest public works project the Department of Inte-

**Patriotism:** *I realize that patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone.* —**Edith Cavell**, English nurse who aided allied soldiers during World War I.

## HED paralegal recognized for long-time achievements

*Story and photo by Alexander Kufel*

**S**hirley Koga, a paralegal specialist in HED Office of Counsel said that she was “astounded” to hear that she was a co-recipient in this year’s Bert P. Pettinato Award for Public Service. The announcement was made July 26 at the Chief Counsel’s Honorary Awards Banquet at West Point, New York.

“I couldn’t think of anything I’ve ever done that would entitle me to such an honor,” said Koga. “I was sure there had been a mistake.”

But, there was no mistake, said attorney Vincent Faggioli, HED chief of counsel. “Shirley has a history of selfless service and glowing reviews from her supervisors for 31 years. To give you an idea of the quality of her contributions, she is the first non-attorney to receive this award. We’re all delighted.”

Adding special significance for Koga is the fact that Bert Pettinato was Pacific Ocean Division counsel for 19 years and she worked for him when she first came to work for the Corps of Engineers.

“Bert was a wonderful man,” she said. “He was a mentor to us all.” She said that they were all very pleased when USACE created the award in Pettinato’s name and it never entered her mind that one day she would be one of the recipients.

The award was established to recognize counsel employees who demonstrate pride in public service through leadership, concern for people, and a personal belief that government service is both a noble calling and a public trust. Abbe Dunning-Newbury, Alaska Engineer District counsel, is co-recipient. Bert Pettinato died in 1993.



*Shirley Koga, HED paralegal specialist, proudly shows her award.*

### Be alarmed... be very alarmed....

*Life in Bldg. 230 changed quite a bit during the past two months as a new silent alarm system with motion detectors was installed throughout the HED building. Contractor Bill Edins from the Advantor Corp. pulls some of the wires connecting the various parts of the system.*

—Photo by Alexander Kufel



## Palau Road...

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Daewoo’s project manager. “It is our first job for the Corps outside Korea and our first job in Micronesia. We are committed to successfully completing it and we will make every effort to overcome difficulties.”

When the 53-mile road is complete it will help transform the Republic of Palau, a remote Micronesian island nation and former U.S. trust territory that has a Compact of Association with the U.S.

Construction of the road is part of a plan to move Palau’s capital from crowded Koror to the relatively wide-open spaces of Melekeok on Babeldaob Island. The road is crucial to opening sparsely populated Babeldaob to a variety of much-desired economic development opportunities.

At present, the few roads on Babeldaob quickly turn into narrow, dirt trails. In moderate rains, these roads quickly turn into impassable quagmires. The paved Palau Compact road will change that and the people of the Republic eagerly await it.

“Everybody is looking forward to seeing it,” said Minister Koshiba. “We have just hired a private firm to do the zoning and master planning on Babeldaob, which is our biggest island and offers potential for development. The direction from our president to me as minister of resources and development is to plan for sustainable development so we can maximize our limited land resources, while protecting the environment.”